# AN
# ESSAY
ON THE
# CHARACTER
OF
# Sir *WILLOUGHBY ASTON*,
LATE OF
# *ASTON* in *CHESHIRE*.
A
# POEM.

*LONDON*,
Printed for *Jacob Tonson*, within *Grays-Inn Gate* next *Grays-Inn Lane*. 1704.

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OF

BRITISH MUSEUM

SIR WILLIAM LEWIS ASTON,

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TO THE

# LADY *CREWE*

OF

# *UTKINTON.*

MADAM,

*AS when the Eagle, with a Parent's Love,*
*Prepares her Young to viſit Realms above;*
*With Heaven's full Luſtre ſhe allures him on,*
*Firſt to admire, and then approach the Sun;*
*Unweary'd he ſurveys the Orb of Light,*
*Charm'd by the Object to maintain his Flight.*

*To* YOU *th' aſpiring Muſe her Labour brings,*
*Thus tries its Fate, and thus expands her Wings:*
*Tempted to gaze on* YOUR *auſpicious Light,*
*This haſty Birth to* YOU *directs its Flight;*
*The Beauties of* YOUR *Mind tranſported views,*
*Admiring Sings, and pleas'd her Flight purſues.*

*Permit theſe looſe, unfiniſh'd Lines to claim*
*The kind Protection of your Parent's Name:*
*Tho' void of Ornaments, and ev'ry Grace,*
*Accept the Piece, as ſacred to your Race.*

*Where*

*Where You behold your great Forefathers Fame,*
*And trace the Springs from whence Your Virtues came:*
*Survey the Triumphs, and the Honours view,*
*That by a long Deſcent devolve on* YOU.

*In vain the Muſe her vanquiſh'd Pencil tries,*
*Where unexhauſted Stores of Beauty riſe:*
*Languid and faint her Labours muſt appear,*
*Whilſt* YOU *tranſcend her faireſt Character.*
*So bright in* YOU *your Father's Graces ſhine,*
*And all the Virtues of your Ancient Line;*
*That none with Pleaſure can the Copy view,*
*Whilſt the Original ſurvives in* YOU.

*Magd. Coll. Oxon.*
*June 2. 1704.*

**Tho. Yalden.**

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**AN**

# AN ESSAY ON THE CHARACTER OF Sir *WILLOUGHBY ASTON.*

WHAT Man Renown'd! what *Britiſh* Worthy's Praiſe
Inſpires the Muſe! and conſecrates her Lays!
Record thy *ASTON*'s celebrated Name,
Diſplay his Virtues, and tranſmit his Fame.
Illuſtrious Actions to thy Care belong,
And form the Beauties of Heroick Song:
None e'er appear'd with ſo immenſe a Store,
Nor ever grac'd harmonious Numbers more.

Nor ſtain, my Muſe, with thy officious Tears,
The bright Example for ſucceeding Years:
Whilſt others in dejected Notes complain,
Sublime thy Song, attempt a nobler Strain.
With Verſe aſſwage his Pious Off-ſpring's Care,
And calm the Sorrows of the weeping Fair:
Diſpel the Shades that Fate untimely ſpread,
And ceaſe to mourn for the Immortal Dead.

*The Praiſe of the County Palatine of* Cheſhire

Where out-ſtretch'd *Britain* in the Ocean's loſt,
And *Dee*, and rapid *Mercy* bound the Coaſt;
There Hills ariſe with Silvan Honours crown'd,
There fruitful Vales, and ſhady Streams abound.
Not *Median* Groves, not *Tempe*'s boaſted Plain,
Nor where *Pactolus* Sands inrich the Main,
Can yield a Proſpect fairer to the Sight,
Nor charm with Scenes of more auguſt Delight.

Here *LUPUS*, and his Warlike Chiefs, obtain'd
Imperial Sway, and great in Honours reign'd:

Deriving TITLES from their Swords alone,
Their LAWS preſerv'd, and LIBERTIES their own.

As when two ſwelling FLOODS their Waves oppoſe,
Nor wou'd confound the URNS from whence they roſe:
But by degrees uniting in a Stream,
Forget their Fountains, and become the ſame.
Thus ſtrove the *Britains* with the *Norman* Race,
Fierce with their Wrongs, and conſcious of Diſgrace:
But when the Fury of their Arms was o'er,
Whom Thirſt of Empire had ingag'd before,
Now Friendſhip binds, and Love unites the more.
From whom a long Deſcent of Worthies ſhine,
Juſt to the Glories of their Martial Line:
Admiring Fame their matchleſs Force records,
Their bounteous Minds, and hoſpitable Boards.
Where *WEEVER* haſtens to receive the *Dane*,
Refreſhing with united Streams the Plain;
A riſing Fabrick with Majeſtick Grace,
Demands the Tribute of thy lofty Praiſe.

Aſton *Houſe, built by Sir* Willoughby.

There *ASTON* ſtands conſpicuous to the Sight;
To *ASTON*, Muſe, direct thy pleaſing Flight!
From far the pompous Edifice behold,
Juſt the Proportions, and the Structure bold.
Beauty is there with Elegance expreſs'd,
Improv'd with Art, with Native Grandeur bleſs'd.
What nobler Object could the Worthy find,
To ſignalize the Greatneſs of his Mind:
Than to adorn, with ſo auguſt a Frame,
The Place that gave his Anceſtors a Name?

Delightful Scene! thy Patron's early Care,
Who rais'd Thee up magnificently Fair:
He form'd thy Beauties, and encreas'd thy Store,
Great in thy Self, but in thy FOUNDER more.

*His Family.*

From gen'rous *HUDARD*, whoſe Victorious Sword
Made *ASTON* ſtoop beneath a Foreign Lord,
Twenty ſucceſſive Chiefs deſcended down;
Illuſtrious all, and matchleſs in Renown.
When injur'd BARONS durſt by Arms reſtrain
Their Sov'reigns Pride, on the embattl'd Plain;
And Rival Roſes, with impetuous Rage,
Involv'd in Blood the next deſcending Age:
Or when abroad we nobler Conqueſts ſought,
For Empire ſtrove, for Fame and Beauty fought;
Their great Exploits our *Britiſh* Annals grace,
And Ancient Bards immortalize the Race.
No Lineage can a nobler Subject yield,
Nor oft'ner ſhar'd the Triumphs of the Field:
Renown'd in War, by Arts indear'd to Fame,
Worthy their high Deſcent, and glorious Name.

But tho' ſo many Pious Worthies join,
To form the Luſtre of a Noble Line:
Paſs not, ungrateful Nymph, neglected by
A Shade renown'd! a Name that cannot die!

His

His Father's Fame with awful Steps purſue,
And raiſe thy Flight with the tranſporting View.
When loud Sedition call'd him early forth,
To merit Wreaths, and ſignalize his Worth,
His bounteous Mind ſupply'd the Royal Part
With flowing Fortunes, and a faithful Heart.
His Sword and Pen were drawn in juſt Defence
Of ſuff'ring Prelates, and an injur'd Prince:
And as ſome Midnight Wolf by Hunger preſs'd,
With boundleſs Fury wou'd the Plains infeſt:
But if he hears the Lion's awful Voice,
His Head he couches, and contracts his Paws.
Thus raging Faction murmur'd in its Den,
Reſtrain'd and aw'd by his ſublimer Pen:
And when Rebellion rear'd its guilty Head,
Before his Arms the vanquiſh'd Monſter fled.

*The Character of Sir Thos. Aſton.*

Immortal Shade! to endleſs Ages reſt!
With Joys, that never Rebel taſted, bleſs'd:
As Champion for the ſacred'ſt Race of Men,
Accept this Tribute from a grateful Pen;
Firm to the Church, and Loyal to the Crown,
Is more than Fame, and ſanctifies Renown.

Nor wonder then ſo many Graces join'd,
To form the perfect Beauties of his Mind:
He from his Anceſtors deriv'd them down,
Improving Virtues by Deſcent his own.

*The Character of Sir Willoughby.*

And firſt thy *ASTON*'s matchleſs Form ſurvey,
From early Youth to Nature's laſt Decay:
The lively Features of his Beauty trace,
And give each Lineament its Native Grace.

Grandeur and Sweetneſs in his Perſon join'd,
Auguſt his Preſence, and his Aſpect kind;
His lofty Stature, and diſtinguiſh'd Mien,
Confeſs'd the Greatneſs of a Soul within.
For gen'rous Natures purifie their Clay,
And o'er the Body ſpread a lucid Ray:
Thro' ev'ry Part informing Spirits fly,
Diſdain Reſtraint, and ſparkle at the Eye.
Such genial Luſtre, ſuch reſiſtleſs Grace
His Limbs adorn'd, and triumph'd in his Face.

*His Perſon.*

But as the Earth, in her capacious Veins,
The ſplendid Treaſure of her Mines contains:
With fading Flow'rs ſhe paints the Surface o'er,
But inward ſhines with unexhauſted Store.
So lovely Forms are on Mankind beſtow'd,
Only to dignifie the Soul's Abode:
Within the Beams of ſparkling Wit we find,
The Charms of Senſe, and Treaſures of the Mind.
Indulgent Nature thus her Bounty ſhow'd,
Thus ev'ry ſhining Faculty beſtow'd:
With Stores inrich'd his intellectual Seat,
And form'd the Luſtre of his Mind complete.

When

*His Education at Cambridge;*

Where aged *CHAM* in fam'd Meanders flows,
His early Youth a ſoft Retirement choſe:
To reſt beneath the venerable Shade,
Where *SPENCER* ſung, and *COWLEY*'s Muſe was laid.
Propitious Nature had prepar'd before,
A Mind tenacious of the learned Store:
The flowing Springs of Knowledge to receive,
And take Impreſſions faſt as Art cou'd give.

Auſpicious *CHAM!* not all thy boaſted Race
Of tuneful Youths, that celebrate thy Praiſe;
That in the various Spheres of Learning ſhine,
Belov'd by *Phœbus* and the ſacred *Nine*;
With nobler Wreaths did e'er thy Temples crown,
Or add, like him, to thy diffus'd Renown.

*And at the Temple.*

And next the flowing Robe employ'd his Care,
And bulky Volumes of the painful BAR:
Tho' Wealth and Fame the Toilſome Search attend,
Yet he purſu'd it for a nobler End.
Obſcure and intricate our Laws appear,
Perplex'd with Comments that ſhou'd make them clear:
His Juſtice thro' the gloomy Miſts ſurvey'd,
And Reaſon found by Subtleties betray'd;
With Eloquence he ſmooth'd the rugged Way,
And ſcatter'd Shades with Judgment's piercing Ray.

*His Learning*

He Nature in her dark Receſſes ſought,
And with Philoſophy ſublim'd his Thought.
In all the various Parts of Learning skill'd,
That *Grecian* Sages, or the *Roman* yield:
He from the Ancients drein'd their richeſt Store,
Refining ſtill with Wit the ſparkling Ore.
Nor did he want the Lyre's harmonious Sound,
Whoſe pleaſing Accents all his Labours crown'd:
The tuneful Lyre, that charms us with Delight,
Repels our Cares, and glads the tedious Night,
Reſtrains our Paſſions, calms our furious Rage,
The Joy of Youth, and the Relief of Age.

His piercing Faculties, ſerenely bright,
Let inward to the Soul diſtincter Light:
His Senſes exquiſite, and Reaſon ſound,
Surmounted all the Obſtacles they found,
In Knowledge verſs'd, in Learning's Depths profound.

*His Accompliſhments.*

Nor were his Hours to Books alone confin'd,
His Perſon was accompliſh'd as his Mind:
He us'd his Weapons with admir'd Succeſs,
Excell'd in Courtſhip, and a kind Addreſs.
Whether he urg'd the Courſer to his Speed,
Or temper'd, with his Skill, the fiery Steed;
When foaming at the Ring he ſpurns the Sands,
Repeats his Stroaks, and lanches as he ſtands:
With grateful Geſture he did each command,
And ply'd his Reins with an inſtructive Hand.

Or

Or whether to the ſportive Dance inclin'd,
In lively Meaſures he the Conſort join'd:
None ever mov'd with more majeſtic Pace,
Show'd greater Art, or more becoming Grace.

*His Converſation*

His flowing Wit, with ſolid Judgment join'd,
Talents united rarely in a Mind,
Had all the Graces, and engaging Art,
That charm the Ear, and captivate the Heart.
No pointed Satyr, nor moroſe Diſdain,
Allay'd the Pleaſure of his Words with Pain:
His inoffenſive Tongue, from Slander free,
From Flatt'ry's Vice, or blaſting Calumny,
Knew all the Springs that ſecret Paſſions move,
Raiſe Admiration, or inſpire with Love.

Sententious and inſtructive his Diſcourſe,
He urg'd his Reaſons with reſiſtleſs Force.
A lively Eloquence adorn'd his Thought,
And happy Turns of Wit occurr'd unſought:
Expreſſive Words his flowing Senſe convey'd,
Juſt were his Thoughts, and pow'rful to perſuade.

*His Moral and Intellectual Virtues.*

But, Goddeſs, now a Nobler Scene ſurvey,
Expand thy Wings, thy brighteſt Charms diſplay!
What various Beauties here diſtract thy Sight!
What Virtues that ſurmount thy towring Flight!
As nameleſs Stars, that form the Galexy,
With undiſtinguiſh'd Luſtre guild the Sky;
So ſhone the Graces that adorn'd his Mind,
And with concenter'd Rays their Beauties join'd:
Whoſe lucid Numbers but repel thy Sight,
And, thus united, form one Glorious Orb of Light.

His Riper Years to Wiſdom he apply'd
Each Path purſu'd, and ev'ry Conqueſt try'd:
Wiſdom, the darling Attribute alone,
By which th' Almighty's more diſtinctly known:
And when contracted to a narrow Span,
Becomes the nobleſt Faculty of Man.

Thro' Books he trac'd her in the pleaſing Chace,
Ranſack'd their Stores, and ſtill maintain'd his Pace.
With Crouds, and buſie Men, he ſtrove to find
The flying Fair, the Object of his Mind:
Thro' ſpecious Arts, thro' all their vain Diſguiſe,
He ſaw, diſtinguiſh'd, and obtain'd the Prize.

His Mind, with each ſuperior Talent fraught,
For Councils form'd his enterpriſing Thought:
Quick of Diſpatch, diſcreet in ev'ry Truſt,
Rigidly honeſt, and ſeverely juſt.
Tho' Kindneſs in his generous Boſom reign'd,
The Dignity of Pow'r he ſtill maintain'd:
None e'er diſcharg'd Affairs with more Adreſs,
Serv'd better Publick Poſts, or ſought them leſs.

His Conſtancy appear'd in ev'ry State,
Fix'd and unmov'd as the Decrees of Fate:
No fluctuating Doubts his Mind diſtreſs'd,
Nor ſhook the ſtrong Foundations of his Breaſt.
His Reſolution bore him ſtill above
The raſh Effects of Enmity or Love:
Firm on the Baſis of himſelf he ſtood,
Of Right tenacious, permanent in Good.

Hence flow'd a Courage unallay'd with Fear,
A Mind undaunted, and a Conſcience clear:
With Innocence, and Virtue for a Guide,
Succeſsfully he ſtem'd th' impetuous Tide.
Intrepid thus he Revolutions bore,
Nor deviated from Paths he trod before:
The Pow'r of Fortune ſtill diſdain'd to own,
Nor courted Smiles, nor ſunk beneath her Frown.

He ſerv'd his Country, with Regards above
The common Views of mercenary Love:
His Paſſion ſuch, if not extended more,
As Pious *Romans* to their *Latium* bore.
No ſpecious Kindneſs popularly feign'd,
By Intereſt rais'd, or with Ambition ſtain'd:
The tender Piety his Actions ſhow'd,
From Duty ſprung, from fond Affection flow'd.

Untainted with the Stains of either Vice,
Of laviſh Waſte, or graſping Avarice:
Nor ſquander'd Wealth, nor with a ſordid Breaſt
Condemn'd to Hords the Treaſures he poſſeſs'd.
His hoſpitable Roof, with Plenty ſtor'd,
Enjoy'd the Bleſſings of a ſmiling Board:
Heaven, that had bleſs'd him with a large Encreaſe,
Gave him a Soul deſerving to poſſeſs.

The Father's Loyalty deſcended down,
Endear'd by Sufferings, to his rival Son.
As *Hannibal* purſu'd the *Roman* State,
With double Portions of his Father's Hate:
Such fix'd Averſion in his Boſom ſprung,
And arm'd his Soul againſt our Factions, young;
A murder'd Prince, and ſlaughter'd Parent's Fate,
On the Rebellious Race entail'd his Hate:
Firm to the Crown his Duty he retain'd,
And o'er his Heart his rightful Monarch reign'd.

*His Piety.* View Beauties yet of a ſublimer kind,
The Heav'nly Off-ſpring of a Pious Mind:
Charms that from Innocence and Virtue flow,
That to Religion all their Splendor owe;
Where no obſcuring Spots their Luſtre hide,
By Crimes untainted, undeform'd with Pride.

Bleſs'd Charity, the pure Etherial Ray,
That Heav'n it ſelf does to our Breaſts convey,

In

In larger Portions to his Boſom came,
And o'er his Soul diffus'd a ſtronger Flame.
In him the Wretched always found Relief,
Patron of Want, Redreſſor of their Grief:
To him th' Afflicted never ſu'd in vain,
He felt their Miſeries and eas'd their Pain.
In midſt of Plenty free from ſenſual Vice,
Nor more indulg'd than Nature would ſuffice:
The calm and equal Temper of his Soul,
Did ev'ry guilty Appetite controul,
Within their Womb the vicious Seeds ſuppreſs'd,
And ſtrangl'd forming Paſſions in his Breaſt.

*His Religion.*

The Church in him enjoy'd a faithful Son,
Whoſe Duty with his early Years begun:
A virtuous Life his juſt Obedience ſhow'd,
And from Religion his Affection flow'd;
Long Application fix'd his Heart ſecure,
He ſearch'd her Doctrines, and he found them pure.

The Liturgy employ'd his daily Care,
His Publick Worſhip, and his Private Pray'r:
To all its Rites Conformity he pay'd,
The Service lov'd, and Diſcipline obey'd.
Such ſtrong Devotion, ſuch Celeſtial Fire,
Inflam'd his Heart, and did his Breaſt inſpire:
As if Religion had engroſs'd the whole,
And Heav'n remain'd the Object of his Soul.

Deſcend, my Muſe, here ſtop thy pleaſing Flight,
For mournful Proſpects, gloomy Shades of Night.
Attend the laſt expiring Scene of Life,
A painful Conflict, and unequal Strife:
Where Nature languiſhes beneath the Weight
Of racking Torments, and approaching Fate.
With matchleſs Patience, and undaunted Mind,
He bore his Anguiſh, and his Soul reſign'd:
As he the glorious Proſpect kept in View,
And our Old World rejected for the New.

*His Iſſue.*

The bounteous Heavens their fruitful Bleſſings ſhed,
And chaſt *LUCINA* crown'd his Nuptial Bed:
From whence a fair and num'rous Off-ſpring came,
The happy Pledges of a Mutual Flame.
From warlike *HUDARD*, Founder of his Race,
Twenty renown'd Deſcents his Lineage grace:
And from his Loins compleat the Number ſprung,
For ev'ry Anceſtor a ſmiling Young.

The happy Husband of a matchleſs Dame,
Endear'd by Virtues, and unblemiſh'd Fame:
No guilty Paſſion ever claim'd a Part,
The Conſort of his Bed engroſs'd his Heart.
As two fair Tapers burn with equal Flame,
Their Heat proportion'd, and their Light the ſame:
And tho' by ſlow Degrees they both decline,
Both to the laſt with the ſame Luſtre ſhine.

Such

[illegible] inſpir'd the Happy Pair,
[illegible], and the Flame their Care:
[illegible] expir'd, and Youth conſum'd away,
[illegible] Affections never felt Decay.

As when the Sun our Hemiſphere reſigns,
He leaves us Light, and by Reflection ſhines:
And when the gloomy Interval is o'er,
He riſes bright and glorious as before:
Such Likeneſs in his Succeſſor we find,
Left as the Image of himſelf behind:
With all the Virtues of his Race endew'd;
The happy Father's in the Son renew'd.

Methinks I ſee a pompous Tomb ariſe,
Beauteous the Form, magnificent the Size:
Inchas'd with Ore, with well-wrought Marble made,
Worthy the Artiſt, and the glorious Shade.

*His Monument.*

Crouds of officious Angels weep around,
With Lamps extinguiſh'd, and their Robes unbound:
With Heads reclin'd, and drooping Wings they mourn,
Form'd to ſuſtain, and grace the pond'rous Urn.

In abject Poſtures, and a flowing Dreſs,
Poſtures that Love and Tenderneſs expreſs:
The Sacred *Nine* ſurround the ſpacious Tomb,
And ſpread infectious Sorrows o'er the Dome;
Their Lyres unſtrung are thrown neglected by,
And ſcatter'd Wreaths in juſt Diſorder lye.

High in the midſt is his Effigies plac'd,
The Boaſt of Art, with ev'ry Beauty grac'd.
Advancing Age in ev'ry Line appears,
And ſhades his Brow with Honourable Years:
Juſt to his Form, his Looks diſſembl'd right,
With Joy detain the fond Spectator's Sight.
Deſcending *Phœbus* crowns the upper Scene,
His Arm extended with triumphant Green:
The Sacred Wreath around his Brows to place,
And ſhedding on him the Paternal Rays.

In vain, alas! we *Mauſoleums* raiſe,
Statues erect, and Pyramids of Praiſe:
A nobler Monument remains behind,
The lively Image of his generous Mind,
The Sacred Pile rais'd by his Pious Care,
Magnificent with Coſt, with Order fair,
Adorn'd with all that laviſh Art cou'd give,
To late Poſterity ſhall make him live.
This ſhall diffuſe his celebrated Name,
More than the Hundred Tongues of buſie Fame:
His Memory from dark Oblivion ſave,
Elude his Fate, and triumph o'er the Grave.

28 MR 59

*FINIS.*